

MINUTES OF THE VIGO COUNTY COUNCIL

Monday September 22, 2008

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilman Tim Curley called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Calling of the roll

James Bramble, Vigo County Auditor called roll. Those present included Brad Anderson, Darrick Scott, Kathy Miller, Mark Bird, Mike Morris, and Tim Curley. Those absent included Jim Hellmann.

Corrections to the journal of the preceding meeting, if needed

There were none.

Public comment

Kelly Wellum, Administrative Assistant, Vigo Alcohol & Drug, expressed her concern regarding the pay increase approved by the Council in February of this year. As a result of this action, she is now being paid less than the employees she supervises in addition; she has more years of service.

Susan Allen, Div 5 Court Reporter expressed her concern of the step and years of service discrepancy of the Court Reporters. She feels this does not only affect their salary, but also affects their retirement.

Judge Adler, Judge Brugnaux, and Judge Newton expressed their concern and desire to see this issue resolved. In addition they praised their employees' loyalty and excellent job performance.

The Council explained that they are aware of this situation and understand the concern. There is a plan of action to correct this, however, this year with very low revenues expected, it is unclear at this time what will or can be done in the 2009 Budget.

Nikki Fuhrmeister, CASA Director, explained the need to keep two employees that are being paid from grant monies. The grant may or may not be awarded again. With the uncertainty of the grant, Nikki would like the two employees to be paid from the Juvenile Court budget in the County General Fund in order to keep them. They help in coordinating the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Volunteers. The program has nearly 100 volunteers and is growing. There are still children on the waiting list and it is essential for them to have representation in court. If a CASA Volunteer is not used, or not available, a GAL (Guardian Ad Litem) must be assigned to a child to represent them in court. A

GAL is an attorney who must be paid by the County. Therefore, using volunteers is saving the County money. The two employees in question are a vital part of coordinating the numerous volunteers. Without them, the program will not be able to run efficiently and may be in jeopardy.

CASA volunteers Dale Luchsinger, Cathy Dorwick, Sue Anderson, Charlie Fuhrer, and Alyce Williamson, spoke to show their support of the CASA program and the gratification they get by being a volunteer that helps children.

Communications from elected officials of the County

There were none.

Communications from other officials or agencies

There were none.

Reports from standing committees

Annual Budget – 2009 Budget

Mr. Darrick Scott handed the gavel to Mr. Mark Bird. Mr. Bird expressed the difficulty of preparing the 2009 Budget due to the lack of revenue the county will receive from property taxes. James Bramble, Vigo County Auditor, assured the Council that there would not be any more property tax revenue than what is currently anticipated. The factors contributing to low revenue are the decrease in property taxes as well as the lower interest rate the county is receiving on investments. Previously the rates had been over five percent; currently the rates are less than three percent. Also, previously the spring installment was due in May allowing a cash flow and allowing time to invest. Now with the due date being pushed back to September along with lower property tax revenues, the County has less to invest and less time to invest it. In addition, in the past expenses have been removed from the County General fund and placed into fee supported funds, which are now drying up, forcing the expenses to return to County General.

Brad Anderson recommended Budget committee reconvene to discuss options where cuts can possibly be made.

President Darrick Scott, looking at the resubmissions of budgets by the department heads, was very displeased with the lack of effort of those who failed to reduce their budgets as requested.

Reports from select committees

There were none.

Ordinances relating to appropriations

There were none.

Honorary resolutions

There were none.

Resolutions relating to fiscal policies of the Council

There were none.

First reading by summary reference of proposed ordinances and resolutions

President Darrick Scott assigned Request of Council for the October 28, 2008 meeting to committee for further review.

Appointments

President Darrick Scott appointed Henry J. Metzger to the Library Board.

Adjournment

Motion: 6:27, **Action:** Adjourn, **Moved by** Brad Anderson, **Seconded by** Kathy Miller.

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote (**summary:** Yes = 6).

Yes: Brad Anderson, Darrick Scott, Kathy Miller, Mark Bird, Mike Morris, and Tim Curley.